accepted but exceptions are made keeping in mind special requirements based on expert's advice.

(d) and (e). The effort of Govt. is to purchase drugs at competitive rates keeping in mind quality of the product. To ensure this, a number of measures are being taken to streamline the purchase system by instituting a high level committee to examine the present system and suggest remedial measures to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Indravati Irrigation Project

*351. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) the date on which the work of Indravati Irrigation Project was started·

(b) the target date for completion of the Project fixed at the beginning:

(c) the initial cost of the project:

(d) the details of cost escalation by now;

(e) the problems faced by the Government in completion of the said project; and

(f) the time by which the project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) Upper Indravati Irrigation Project in Orissa was started during the year 1978-79.

(b) The Project was originally scheduled for completion during 1987-88.

(c) The project was originally approved by the Planning Commission in 1978 for an estimated cost of Rs. 208.14 crores.

(d) The latest estimated cost (1994 price level) including cost of power component of the project is Rs.1400.92 crores.

(e) The main constraints in completion of the project are paucity of funds and delay in acquisition of land, both forests and private.

(f) The revised target for completion of the project is 2001—2002

Fire Accidents in Cochin Port

*352. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the repeated fire accidents are taking place in Cochin Port:

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to check fire accidents?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Two fire accidents took place in the areas not under the direct operational control of the Port Trust.

(b) One accident took place on 17.6.1996 in a shed leased out to a private party for storage of wood pulp and newsprint. The second incident took place on 26.6.1996 in the conveyor belt system of M/s FACT Limited at Ernakulam due to friction. All Available fire fighting facility in Cochin including that of navy was mobilised to control the fire in both the cases.

(c) The Port Trust has issued necessary instructions in the Willingdon Island area to all concerned to initiate precautionary measures to check fire accidents.

Border Road Construction in Manipur

*353. SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH · Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether work on construction of all roads within 25 Km. Belt of International Border with Myanmar in Manipur State has been stopped;

(b) if so. the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Union Government propose to permit Government of Manipur to continue with construction of roads as before in the interests of the local people of the area; and

(d) if so, the number of villages lying within 25 Km. from the International Border in Manipur likely to be affected by stopping the construction of roads?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a).

(c) and (d). A Statement is attached.

STATEMENT

As per the existing instructions, construction of roads within a 25 Km. belt of the International Border with Myanmar requires prior clearance of the Ministry of Defence for security reasons. The Government of Manipur can construct roads within the aforementioned belt after obtaining prior clearance on case by case basis from the Ministry of Defence. Recently. the Ministry of Defence accorded clearance to the request of the Manipur State Government for construction of 4 roads in Ukhrul District within the 25 Km. belt from the International Border. However, due to security consideration, the request of the State Government for the construction of 3 more roads within this belt, was not acceded to. As a result, it is estimated that approximately 16 villages may not be connected with surfaced motorable roads immediately.